

Bushfire Management Plan – Ravensbourne Field Studies Centre



University of
Southern
Queensland

1 Scope

The purpose of this Bushfire Management Plan is to ensure risk to persons and facilities due to bushfire is minimised.

The plan is subordinate to the Emergency Procedures Manual and applies to all staff, students and contractors attending Ravensbourne Field Studies Centre.

2 Site Information

Ravensbourne Field Studies Centre (the Centre) is a remote, 2.9 hectare site used for teaching and research activity on an ad-hoc basis. The Centre is located 45 minutes northeast of the Toowoomba Campus and is accessed via State Route 85 (*Figure 1- Centre Location*).

Adjacent to Ravensbourne National Park, the field station consists of a 100-year-old timber ex-schoolhouse, and two outbuildings. The property is surrounded by some cleared land, dense rainforests, grasslands, woodlands and agricultural land. Access to the property is via an unsealed road. There is a small dam on another property located around 200m from the site.

Response times for Emergency Services will be delayed due to its remote location and may be difficult due to the single vehicular access point off Post Office Road.

The Centre requires self-initiated evacuation¹.

¹Some people may choose to leave early, even in the absence of a hazard but due to a forecast of high bushfire danger. Self-initiated evacuees manage their own withdrawal, including transportation arrangements. Source: Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (2023) *Evacuation Planning* East Melbourne, Australia

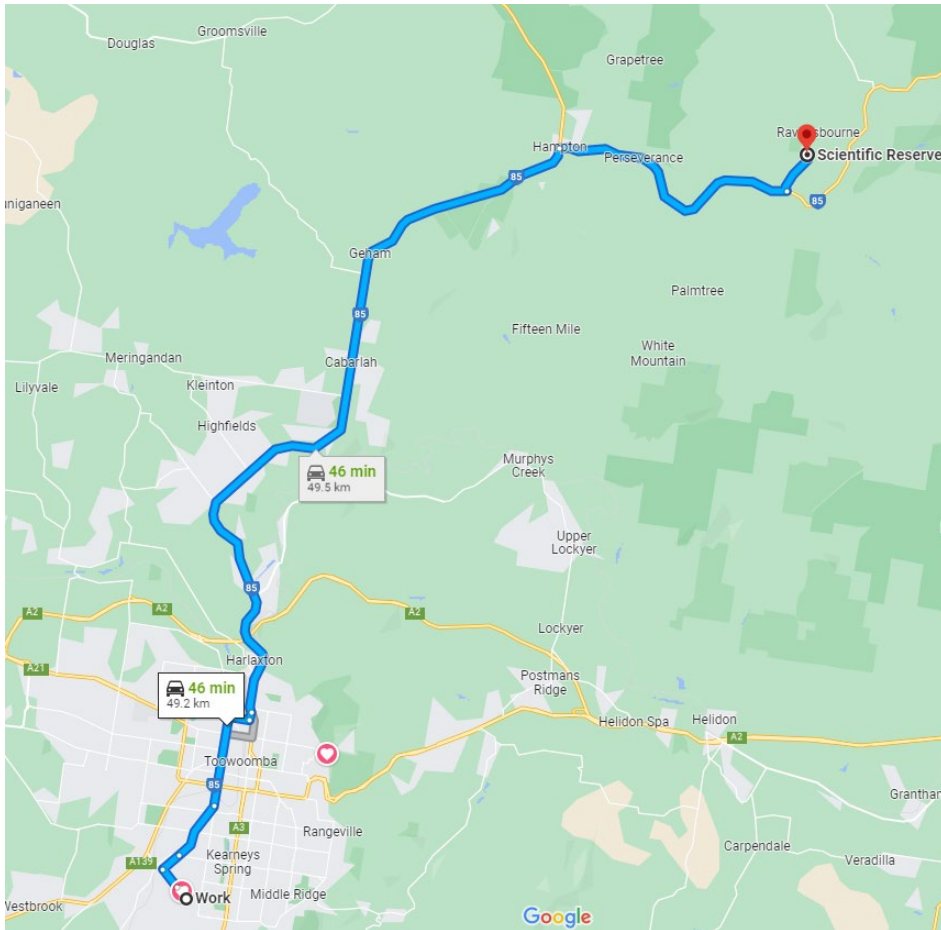


Figure 1- Centre Location

3 Procedures

3.1 Smoke Free Site

In accordance with the University's Smoke-Free Procedure, smoking is not permitted at or around the Centre.

3.2 Risk

A Safety Risk Assessment has been completed on the site which notes the residual risk of harm as a result bushfire as **medium**. This is due to its proximity to an area that could be at risk of a dangerous fire, the site remoteness, facility construction materials, and lack of water infrastructure.

There is a risk to life, property and the environment should a bushfire break out in the vicinity of the site. Bushfires are dynamic and conditions can change very quickly.

3.3 Controls

Controls for the risk include site maintenance and management. Due to the location of the site and accessibility, the major control will be **closure of the site** when any of the following situations are met:

1. the fire danger rating is "Extreme" or greater,
2. the site is subject to a bushfire warning of "Watch and Act", or "Emergency Warning", or;
3. an active fire front exists within a 25km radius of the site.

Site evacuation is to occur immediately if any of the above conditions occur whilst the Centre is occupied.

Keys for the site are to be distributed by UniSQ Security before each site visit and must be returned to them afterward. No permanent keys will be issued to maintain control over site access. This practice allows for proper documentation and management in the event of site closure or during emergencies when the site is in use.

Any University activity on the site should be supported by a current field trip safety risk assessment that addresses bushfire risk and controls.

Elements to consider when undertaking the risk assessment:

- Evaluate the bushfire risk and warning in the area, considering factors like weather conditions, fuel load, and historical fire data. Continue to monitor the risk whilst on site.
- Self-initiated evacuation process and trigger.
- Identify the types and extent of potential fire hazards within and around the facility.
- Identify whether a fire will be lit on site (firepit) noting that if the fire danger rating is high or a fire ban is in place, fires may not be lit.
- Monitor local weather conditions and bushfire alerts and establish a system for receiving warnings from local authorities.
- Fire briefing for visitors on arrival at the site (based on this Plan).
- Smoking on the facility grounds is prohibited and should not occur in its proximity.
- A person should be designated to remotely monitor fire conditions and be in contact with site occupants.

Other Controls

Emergency Contact Information

An up-to-date list of relevant emergency contact numbers for local fire services, law enforcement, and medical services will be available on site. Emergency evacuation routes and assembly point signage will be displayed on site.

Fire Weather Information

Queensland Fire Danger Ratings (*Figure 3 - Fire Danger Ratings*) are published on the Bureau of Meteorology website and can be accessed at <http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/forecasts/fire-danger-ratings.shtml>.

Ravensbourne Field Studies Centre is located within the **Southeast Coast** weather district.

Fire Danger Rating	Site Specific Action
Moderate	Active monitoring
High	Active monitoring
Extreme	Closure of site / evacuate
Catastrophic	Closure of site / evacuate

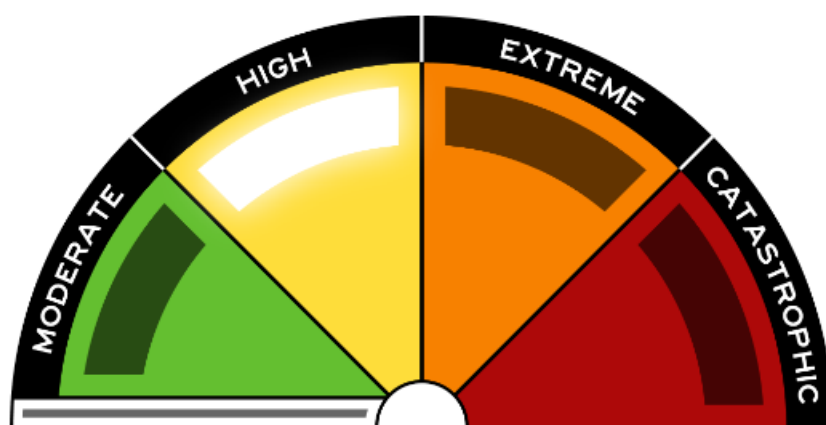


Figure 2 - Fire Danger Ratings

Bushfire Warnings

All site users should be familiar with the official Bushfire Warning system (*Figure 4- Bushfire Warning System*). When there's a bushfire in the area, it's up to all users to take notice, stay informed, make decisions and act. Current bushfire warnings and incidents can be found at <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/Current-Incidents> .

Bushfire Season

Typically, in Southern Queensland, the bushfire season begins in spring, lasting through until end of summer (September – February). However, from time to time the season may be extended, with bushfire threats existing either earlier or later in the season.



Figure 3- Bushfire Warning System

3.4 Site Management

Firebreaks and vegetation on site will be maintained by Facilities Management to reduce fuel load.

Firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers, will be available on site and be maintained by Facilities Management. Staff, students and contractors are not to fight fires unless evacuation from the facility is impossible or they have appropriate training, the fire is small and is safely and easily contained and they are not alone.

Staff/students are not to stay in the area to preserve equipment and or facilities if there is a fire.

4 Emergency Plan Information

Responsible Officer	Director (Estate Services)
Accountable Officer	Executive Director (Facilities Management)
Subordinate Schedules	
Effective Date	01/08/2024
Review Date	12-months from Effective Date